

**SUMMARY OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CHAIRPERSONS
DECEMBER 4, 2001**

The Board of Directors (BoD) of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) held a joint meeting with the NELAC committee chairpersons in Arlington, VA on December 4, 2001, at 8:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its Chairperson, Ms. Silky Labie of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The draft agenda for this meeting is shown in Attachment A, action items for this meeting are shown in Attachment B. The action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment C and a list of participants is shown in Attachment D. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance as identified in the BoD agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Labie welcomed the committee to the start of the NELAC 7i Conference. She introduced the Ms. Arlyn Brediger as scribe from the new contractor, Anteon Corporation and Dr. Brian Schumacher, US EPA, National Exposure Research Laboratory, Environmental Sciences Division. The meeting agenda was reviewed and an additional topic requested by Mr. Ken Jackson was added to the Agenda regarding "Processing of Committee Minutes."

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Approval of Minutes

The BoD reviewed the minutes of the November 8, 2001 teleconference. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes as written with the provision that the Agenda be included as Attachment A.

Action Item Review

The New Action Items resulting from the November 8, 2001, teleconference were reviewed and determined to be complete in their entirety.

The Action Items from the Previous Meetings were reviewed and the status is shown in Attachment C to these minutes.

Outcomes of Strategic Planning Meeting

Ms. Jeanne Hankins reported that considerable work was accomplished during the strategic planning meeting held December 1-3, 2001, with critical issues identified. The participants attending that meeting provided information to allow the prioritization of issues--with the primary issue being "Communication." Some potential solutions were also identified. A discussion regarding the EPA and NELAC restructuring took place. In conclusion, it was determined that NELAC would definitely move toward privatization prior to the NELAC 8 Conference, July 2002.

Ms. Hankins and Mr. Edward Kantor also reported on a National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) meeting. They discussed the National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA), a program supported in part by NIST that recognizes organizations, both government and private sector, that accredit laboratories. NACLA was established in 1998 and expects to be fully independent of NIST by 2003. They have recognized three Accrediting Authorities to date with a membership of 130, yearly funding of \$200,000, of which \$100,000 is provided by NIST. The other \$100,000 is received through membership dues, and training courses. NIST also provides the office space as well as administrative support and supplies for this effort.

Ms. Hankins also noted that NACLA, through Ms. Breitenberg of NIST, had cited NELAC as a successful enterprise in coordinating accreditation requirements among various levels of governments.

It was suggested that there only be an "Annual" NELAC Conference every 2-to-5 years. During the non-annual conference years, there could be meetings which would focus on individual topics such as a communication plan, a business plan, etc.

There are several ways to maintain the private sector involvement including:

- create subcommittees under ELAB
- maintain status quo
- statutory authority through Congress mandating private-sector input
- a non-profit organization
- others not currently identified

The next steps in the process to formalize the NELAC restructuring were addressed. It was noted that discussions with the EPA would need to take place. Ms. Hankins urged that participants share ideas and to come up with more options. Another strategic planning meeting would most likely occur to review the results out of the recent 2-day session. A question as to whether a NELAC committee should take the lead on this effort was not resolved. The Board of Directors is open to other ideas for improvements. There was a reiteration for the requirement of very clear communication to avoid disruption of the NELAC work currently in progress and it is essential to stress the importance of the private sector involvement in this program.

Notice of Changes in Bylaws and Constitution

Dr. Kenneth Jackson reported on the Program, Policy & Structure Committee results discussed at the November 28, 2001, teleconference related to suggested changes. Copies of the NELAC Constitution and Bylaws were distributed to the participants for review and discussion of the handwritten annotations. Mr. Jackson stated that various sections noted for change had to do with language limiting NELAC to state and federal membership. It was also determined language should be added to include Tribal membership. Further discussions and language clarification will be done at the next Program Policy and Structure Committee teleconference.

The BoD and Chairs then reviewed the document with the following results of suggested changes to the Articles of the NELAC Constitution regarding tribal participation.

The NELAC Bylaws were reviewed by the BoD and Chairs noting the Program Policy and Structure Committee suggested changes.

The language changes to the NELAC Constitution and Bylaws will be developed by the Program Policy and Structure Committee prior to the NELAC 8 Annual Conference in July 2002.

NELAC Operating Policies

Operating Policy #18 (Resolving Conflicts with Federal Regulatory Requirements and Policies) - A copy of this policy was distributed to the BoD and Chairs for further review and comments. Ms. Labie set a deadline of December 13, 2001, to return comments to her. At that time, Ms. Labie will develop another draft for final review and discussion.

NELAC Operating Policies 1 through 17 - The policies were distributed to the participants of this meeting. Ms. Labie requested that the BoD and Chairs also review all the policies and submit comments or questions regarding changes to her no later than December 13, 2001.

Outstanding Issues

Ms. Barbara Burmeister requested status on the letter to the EPA and if a determination has been made as to whether the EPA will continue to maintain the PT database. Ms. Labie indicated that she is awaiting official correspondence with the final decision. As soon as she receives this document, Ms. Labie will relay the information to the BoD and Chairs.

Meetings with EPA Officials Update

Requested Meeting with Mr. Henry Longest - Dr. Jackson stated that he has scheduled a breakfast meeting during this conference week to include himself, Dr. Fred Siegelman, Dr. Harry Gearhart, Mr. David Friedman, Ms. Lara Autry, and Dr. John Lyon. They would like to share the NELAC progress made on Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS).

Requested Meeting with Ms. Linda Fisher - Ms. Labie stated that a thank you letter from the NELAC BoD went out to Ms. Fisher after meeting with her in early November. A response letter has not been received by Ms. Labie with results of that meeting. Also, another meeting has been requested by Ms. Labie but not confirmed for the week of this conference.

Environmental Council of States (ECOS) Meeting Update

Ms. Labie reported about the importance of NELAC obtaining the support of the Environmental Council of States (ECOS). Ms. Shields suggested that NELAC may be invited to attend the ECOS Conference in Wisconsin to be held in April 2002, at which time NELAC may be able to participate in the poster session.

Quality Staff Annual Meeting

Dr. Siegelman reported that the 21st Annual Meeting on Managing Environmental Quality Systems hosted by EPA's Quality Staff is scheduled for April 8-11, 2002, in Phoenix, AZ. The conference information is posted on the EPA Quality website located at <http://www.epa.gov/quality1/meeting.html>. Dr. Siegelman stated that there would be a block of time, approximately ½-day, allotted for a NELAC session. The focus will be on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Quality Management Plans (QMPs) that match NELAC requirements. It was also suggested that the statistical approach to Field Sampling should also be discussed during the NELAC session. It was recommended that this should be done at a separate Field Activities session. Dr. Siegelman will inquire as to adding this subject to the conference agenda at a separate session. He indicated that the abstract submission deadline may have already passed.

AARB Report

On behalf of Ms. Judith Duncan, Ms. Hankins reported that there will be no Accrediting Authority Review Board (AARB) report until the Annual Meeting in July 2002.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no old business issues to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Policy on Meeting Minutes

Dr. Jackson had concerns regarding the process of approving and posting teleconference minutes to the NELAC website. The BoD and Chairs discussed the current process and it was decided that they review the NELAC Operating Policy #7 and submit comments/suggestions to Ms. Labie. The BoD will review the requested changes at their January 2002 BoD meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 13, 2001, at 1:30 p.m., EST. *(Note that this meeting was subsequently canceled.)*

**NEW ACTION ITEMS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS/CHAIRS
DECEMBER 4, 2001**

Item No.	Action	Status
1	Add Field Activities field sampling issue to the Quality Staff Conference (Siegelman)	
2	Post/distribute AARB Report slides (Hankins)	
3	Comments/suggested changes to NELAC Policies 1-18 to BoD by 12/13/01 (BoD/Chairs)	
4	Follow up on possibility of attendance at the ECOS Conference (Aurora Shields)	
5	Review comments/suggested changes to NELAC Policy #7 at January 2002 BoD meeting (BoD)	

**ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 4, 2001**

No.	Date of Meeting	Action	Status
1	04/13/00	Dr. Jackson and Dr. Kimsey will provide a short summary of recent Accrediting Authority workgroup teleconferences to Ms. Hankins to be included in the materials for the next board meeting. (Will be an on-going item).	Ongoing
2	01/11/99	Committee Chairs are to prepare “Frequently Asked Questions” for posting on the NELAC Website. They are to submit these to the Membership and Outreach Committee.	Ongoing
6	05/04/00	The Membership and Outreach committee will draft a policy addressing the logistics of web-submitted issues: routing, response, etc.	Ongoing
8	05/08/00	Dr. Brokopp will explore organizational issues with ECOS.	Ongoing
9	7/26/00	Dr. Brokopp will continue to lead exploration of viable options, including financial issues.	Ongoing
13	7/13/00	The Program Policy and Structure Committee is tasked with developing specific draft wording of a reorganized NELAC at NELAC 6i.	Deferred
14	8/10/00	Ms. Allen, Ms. Labie, and Dr. Brokopp will draft a plan, based on the most recent work by the transition committee, for submittal to EPA.	Deferred
22	10/31/00	Committee efforts should cite by reference the desired ISO wording, adding explanatory and supplemental notes as needed.	Ongoing
24	10/31/00	Ms. Hankins will identify a representative from ISO be invited to participate in a future Board teleconference to discuss viable options for use of ISO language in the NELAC Standard.	Deferred
35	1/1/01	Dr. Brokopp and Dr. Kimsey will explore possible legal options for continued use of ISO language in the NELAC Standard.	Ongoing

**ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 4, 2001**

No.	Date of Meeting	Action	Status
42	2/8/01	Dr. Billets will follow-up with Membership and Outreach committee on Item No. 6 (05/04/2000).	Ongoing
61	7/12/01	Format NELAC Policies to ensure consistency in style. (Labie)	Complete
63	10/11/01	Contact Accrediting Authorities to see if anyone is available to attend WEFTEC 2002 and give update on NELAC (Kimsey)	Ongoing
65	10/11/01	Revise Federal Register Notice (Hankins)	Complete
66	10/11/01	Review all NELAC policies and changes (Hankins)	Ongoing
67	10/11/01	Send NELAC Policy #16 to Barbara Burmeister for comments (Labie)	Complete

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
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DECEMBER 4, 2001**

Name	Affiliation	Address
Ms. Silky Labie Chair	FL Dept. of Envir. Protection	T: 850-488-2796 F: 850-922-4614 E: silky.labie@dep.state.fl.us
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Mr. Ed Kantor Executive Secretary	USEPA/ORD	T: 702-798-2690 F: 702-798-2261 E: kantor.edward@epamail.epa.gov
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Mr. Thomas Maloney	USGS National Water Quality Laboratory	T: 303-236-3460 F: 303-236-3499 E: tmaloney@usgs.gov
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Ms. Aurora Shields (absent)	KS Dept. of Health & Env.	T: 785-296-6198 F: 785-296-8068 E: ashields@kdhe.state.ks.us
Mr. Joe Slayton	USEPA/Region 3	T: 410-305-2653 F: 410-305-3095 E: slayton.joe@epamail.epa.gov
Dr. Kenneth Jackson (invited guest)	NY Environmental Laboratory Approval Program	T: 518-485-5570 F: 518-485-5568 E: jackson @wadsworth.org
Mr. Brian Schumacher (Invited Guest)	US EPA, National Exposure Research Laboratory, ESD	tel: 702-798-2242 fax: 702-798-2107 email: schumacher.brian@epa.gov

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Name	Affiliation	Address
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Mr. Matthew Caruso Chairperson National Database (absent)	NY State Dept. of Health	T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568 E: caruso@wadsworth.org
Mr. Kevin Coats Chairperson Regulatory Coordination	US Army Corps of Engineers - HTRW CX	T: (402) 697-2563 F: (402) 697-2595 E: kevin.h.coats@usace.army.mil
Mr. Louis R. C. Johnson Chairperson Accrediting Authority	LA Dept. of Environmental Quality	T: (225) 765-2405 F: (225) 765-2408 E: louis_j@deq.state.la.us
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Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor Chairperson On-Site Assessment	Wisconsin DNR	T: (608) 266-9257 F: (608) 267-5231 E: sotoma@dnr.state.wi.us
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